

A PROCLAMATION

Against Regrating of Victual, and Fore-stallers, and allowing the Importation of Victual free of Publick Burden.

WILLIAM by the Grace of GOD, King of Great-Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, to Macers of Our Privy Council, Messengers at Arms, Our Sheriffs in that part, conjunctly and severally, specially constitute, greeting: Forasmuch as by several Acts of Parliament, the keeping of Victual to a dearth, is strictly prohibited; and particularly, it is Statute by the Acts *James* the Second, Parliament Sixth, *Caput* Twenty two and Twenty three, that for the eschewing of Dearth, Sheriffs, Baillies, and other Officers, both to Burgh and to Land, inquire what persons buys Victual, and holds it to a Dearth, and that the saids Sheriffs and Officers make such known, that in case they hold more than will sustain them and their Meinzie to new Corn, they may be punished and demeaned as Ockerers and Usurers, and the Victual escheated to Us, and that the same be presented to Mercats, and sold as the price goes: And by the Act *James* the Second, Parliament Ninth, *Caput* Thirty eighth and Thirty ninth, It is ordained that no manner of Victual be holden in Girnells by any man to a dearth, but allennarly what is needful for their own Persons, and sustentation of their Housholds; and that the saids Persons present all that they have more to the Mercat, under the pain of Escheat thereof: And Searchers are appointed in *Edinburgh* and *Leith* to make the saids Acts effectual. As likewise, the Crime of Fore-stalling is forbidden by several Acts and Statutes, and particularly by the Act *James* the Sixth, Parliament Twelfth, *Caput* One hundred and fourty eighth, It is declared, that who buys any Merchandise or Victual coming to Fair or Mercat, or makes any Contract or Promise for the buying of the same before the said Merchandise or Victual shall be in the Fair or Mercat-place ready to be Sold, or shall make any motion by Word, Writ, or Message, for raising of the Prices, or dearer selling of the said Merchandise and Victual, or who shall dissuade any from coming and bringing the foresaid Merchandise and Victual to Fair or Mercat, shall be esteemed and judged a Fore-staller: And it is ordained that all such Fore-stallers may be pursued before the Justices or Magistrats of Burghs, and that without a special Libel, but only upon Fore stalling in general, and the persons convict to be Fined for the first fault in Fourty Pounds, for the second in One hundred Merks, and for the third to incur the tinfell of Moveables. And seeing that through the not due observance, and the execution of the foresaid Acts, the calamity of the Countrey by the present scarcity and dearth is greatly increased: Therefore We advice of the Lords of Our Privy Council, have thought fit to revive the same, and ordain them to be put to strict execution; and for that effect to impower and require all Sheriffs of Shires, Stewarts of Stewartries, Lords and Baillies of Regalities and their Deputs, and Magistrats of Burghs, as likewise all Commissioners of Supply, and Justices of Peace, to cause inquiry and search to be made who holds up, or Girnells Victual, or keeps Stacks contrary to the foresaid Laws, and to command and charge the keepers up of the said Victual in Girnells, Stacks, or otherways, contrary to the saids Statutes, either to Thresh out, bring and expose the same for Sale in open and ordinary Mercats, or otherwise to open their Girnells, and other Houses where the Victual is kept, and there sell the same, as the saids Sheriffs, Stewarts of Stewartries, Lords and Baillies of Regalities and their Deputs, and Magistrats of Burghs, or any two of the saids Commissioners shal find the ordinary price to rule for the time in the Countrey, not below the last *Candlemas* Fiers; with certification if they failzie therein, they shall be proceeded against, and the pains of the foresaid Acts of Parliament execute upon them with all rigor: And in the mean time the Victual Girnelled, and unlawfully kept up as said is, Arrested and Sequestrat by the foresaid Sheriffs and others, as Escheat. And further, We with Advice foresaid, Command and Charge all Magistrats of Burghs, and other Officers of the Law, to take care that all Mercats and Fairs be duly regulat conform to the Laws, without extortion, and to cause put the foresaid Acts of Parliament against Fore-stallers to due and vigorous execution, certifying the saids Sheriffs, Magistrats and others, who shall fail in their duty in the premisses, that upon information given to the Lords of Our Privy Council, they shall be therefore severely punished as the Lords of Our Privy Council shall see cause. And further, for the better relief of the Country under the present great scarcity, whereby the prices of Victual are arisen above the rates mentioned in the Act of Parliament for prohibiting the Import of Forraign Victual: We with Advice foresaid, do hereby grant license and full liberty to all persons to Import Victual, and Corns of all sorts, from any Forraign Kingdom or Countrey, and that free of Custom, Excise, or other Imposition; And for that effect recommends it to the Commissioners of Our Thesaury, to discharge the exacting thereof for the said Victual to be Imported as said is, after the day and date hereof: And that notwithstanding of any Act of Parliament, or Book of Rates imposing the same, declaring that this license and liberty is to endure till the first day of *October* next to come. OUR WILL IS HEREFOR, and We Charge you strictly, and Command, that incontinent these Our Letters seen, ye pals to the Mercat-Cross of *Edinburgh*, and remanent Mercat-Crosses of the Head-Burghs of the several Shires and Stewartries within this Kingdom, and thereat in Our Name and Authority, make Publication of the Premisses, that none pretend ignorance: And ordains these presents to be Printed.

Given under Our Signet at Edinburgh, the Fourteenth Day of July, and of Our Reign the Tenth Year, 1698.



Per Actum Dominorum Secreti Concilii.

GILB. ELIOT Cls. Sti. Concilii.

GOD save the King.